

# Discern, Question, and Resist.

**Jennifer Vinopal / @jvinopal**

**ARL Digital Scholarship Institute, 6/5/2017**

“

We can't make sense of what's  
happening in front of us  
because, somehow, we've  
failed to see that this has been  
happening all along.

—Rev. Barber. ThinkProgress, 12/15/2016.

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Kimberly Sweetman  
Cecily Walker  
Slack Women  
@blackgirlinmain  
@lollardfish  
@prisonculture

“

bring a critical lens to digital scholarship practice,  
[integrating] issues related to diversity, social justice, digital labor, etc.

—Sue Baughman. Personal communication, 3/3/2017.



My **Power** and **Responsibility**

“

Dismantling oppression and  
erecting **systems of equity**.

—April Hathcock. Grit? Git!, 5/12/2017.

**WHITE SILENCE  
IS VIOLENCE  
#BLACKLIVESMATTER**

**CLEAN  
ENERGY  
NOW**

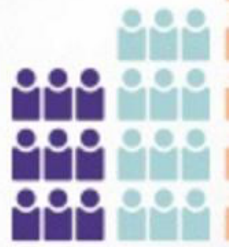


“

**Neutrality is a myth** and all  
things are tinted by the  
systemic bias inherent to  
our society.

—April Hathcock. It's My Struggle—Give Me Space, 2/29/2016.

Data is political



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## How data does political things: The processes of encoding and decoding data are never neutral.



*It is difficult to see the political structure of data, because data maintains a veneer of scientific objectivity. But data is inherently a form of politics, argues **Jeffrey Alan Johnson**. Data does not just allocate material things of value, it allocates moral values as well. Data producers encode a state of the world at a given time, which is then decoded by data users to shape social practice. As such, a political theory of data, grounded in distributive and relational information justice, is necessary.*

— Jeffrey Alan Johnson, “How Data Does Political Things.” 2015

Data influences political practice.

Data collection:

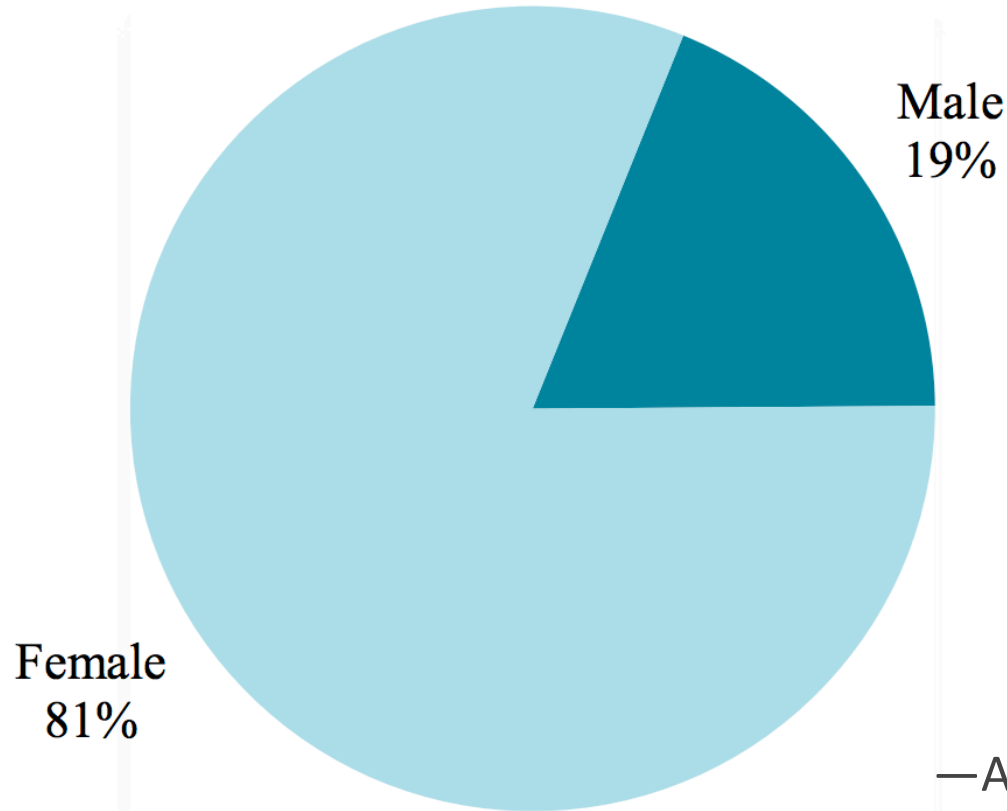
Who mandates it be collected?

Who determines data fields &  
validation tables?

— Jeffrey Alan Johnson. “How Data Does Political Things,” 2015



**ALA Members by Gender**  
*% of members self-identifying*



—ALA. “2017 Demographics.”



# ALA Member Demographics Survey: Welcome!

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Thank you, ALA Member, for agreeing to participate in this survey.

For many years, ALA has asked its members to provide information about three aspects of their organization, principal area of work, and level of responsibility. It was determined that additional information would help ALA more effectively advocate for ALA members, and to provide services more effectively. The ALA Council and the ALA Membership Committee approved the work of a task force that developed a member demographics survey. ALA takes a big step toward knowing itself and being able to describe itself to you. Of course, member response. Please take a few minutes to answer the following six questions. Your responses are confidential, and ALA only will report about total responses. Thank you in advance for your participation.

1. What is your gender?

☐

Male

☐

Female



**Sarah Stevens**

@microStevens



**Follow**

Title required for conf registration  
Choices are Mrs, Miss, Dr, Prof, or Mr, I chose  
Mr.  
Shouldn't need to reveal my marital status to go

RETWEETS

LIKES

**17**

**21**



1:11 PM - 3 Jun 2016



“

the faces of general **law-[a]biding public** have a greater degree of resemblance compared with the faces of criminals, or criminals have a higher degree of dissimilarity in facial appearance than **normal people**.

—Wu and Zhang. Automated Inference on Criminality, 11/13/2016.

“

[this work] ‘scientifically’  
legitimizes a correlation that itself  
emerges from training data with  
**embedded social bias.”**

—Arcas, Mitchell, and Todorov. Physiognomy’s New Clothes, 5/7/2017.



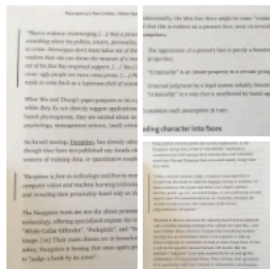
**Tressie Mc** ✓

@tressiemcphd

Following



This is always the promise of technology,  
efficient oppression



**Frank Pasquale** @FrankPasquale

How machine learning is rationalizing discredited theories of caste, phrenology, & innate inferiority  
[medium.com/@blaisea/physi...](https://medium.com/@blaisea/physi...) #ML

RETWEETS

69

LIKES

126



7:56 AM - 20 May 2017



7



69



126

## OUR CLASSIFIERS



High IQ



Academic Researcher



Professional Poker  
Player



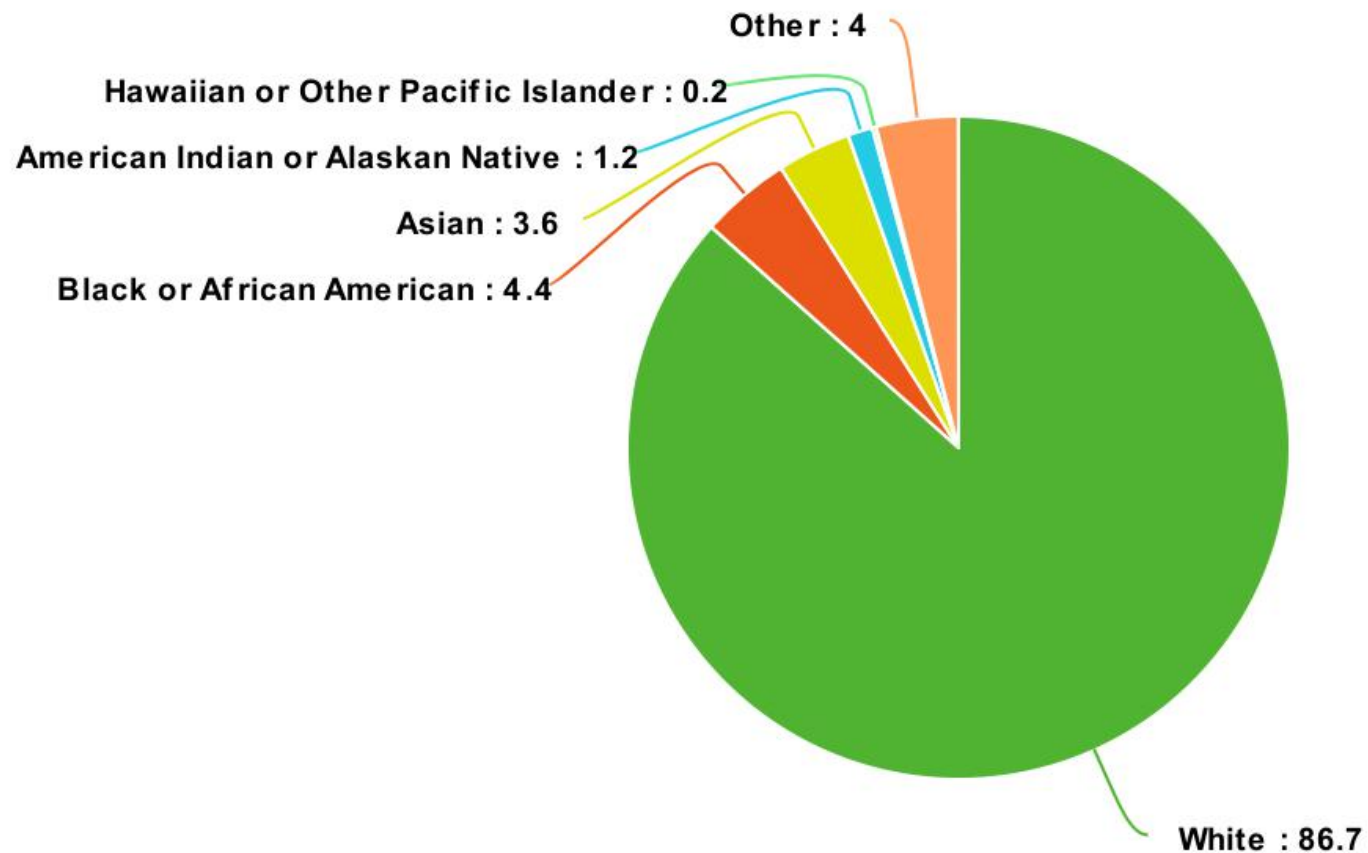
Terrorist

“

ClimateQUAL<sup>®</sup> is an assessment of library staff **perceptions** concerning (a) their library's commitment to the principles of diversity, (b) organizational policies and procedures, and (c) staff attitudes.

— “About ClimateQual.” Accessed 6/6/2016

ALA Members by Race or Family Origin, January 2017  
American Library Association





“ whites are willing to live with only a handful of African American neighbors [some say ~20%]...

[For African Americans] a “50-50” neighborhood is routinely identified as the most attractive

— Maria Krysa, et. al, “Does Race Matter in Neighborhood Preferences?” 2009

“

Climatequal sample question:

The race/sexual orientation of **a** team/division member does NOT affect how **they** are valued on this team/division.

— “ClimateQUAL Sample Questions.” Accessed 6/6/2016

“

non-minority librarians are unlikely  
to report observing racial  
microaggressions

[even though ‘minority’ librarians  
are, in fact, experiencing them.]

—Jaena Alabi, “Racial Microaggressions in Academic Libraries.” 2015



How much diversity in an organization is enough to make staff in the dominant culture feel like the workplace has achieved an acceptable amount of, but not too much diversity?



How much “valuing diversity” does the organization need to demonstrate in order for staff from the dominant culture to perceive it as sufficient?

# Models of Resistance

# Google Equates Black Girls With Sex; Why?

The search engine's profit motive doesn't always work in the best interests of women of color.



**BY: SAFIYA UMOJA NOBLE**

Posted: March 13, 2013

—Safiya Umoja Noble. “Google Equates Black Girls with Sex.” March 13, 2013

“

[Google] could do little to affect search results. It claimed that its **algorithm technology was neutral**, and search results were a matter of how people use Google, rather than the technology itself

—Safiya Noble. “Google Equates Black Girls with Sex.” March 13, 2013



“

“...These results don't reflect Google's own opinions or beliefs — as a company,

**we strongly value a diversity of perspectives, ideas and cultures.”**

—Ben Guarino. “Google faulted for racial bias...” June 10, 2016



Safiya  
Noble

# ON OUR BACKS

*Entertainment for the Adventurous Lesbian*



SPRING 1985  
\$4.00

“

Our unique **library crowd-funding** model uses **library acquisition dollars** to fund the development of digital collections. **Working closely with content holders**, we help define and scope the collection...

—Reveal Digital website. Accessed 6/6/2016

# digitization: just because you can, doesn't mean you should

I learned this week that Reveal Digital has digitized On Our Backs (OOB), a lesbian porn magazine that ran from 1984-2004. This is a part of the Independent Voices collection that “chronicles the transformative decades of the 60s, 70s and 80s through the lens of an independent alternative press.” For a split second I was really excited — porn that was nostalgic for me was online! Then I quickly thought about friends who appeared in this magazine before the internet existed. I am deeply concerned that this kind of exposure could be personally or professionally harmful for them.

—Tara Robertson. March 20, 2016

“

Consenting to a porn shoot that would be in a queer print magazine is a different thing to consenting to have your porn shoot be available online. I'm disappointed in my profession. **Librarians have let down the queer community** by digitizing On Our Backs.

—Tara Robertson. March 20, 2016



I hit the jackpot when found a thin folder labelled Contributors Agreements. All of them weren't there, but there were many contracts where the content creators did not sign over all rights to the magazine. Here are three examples.

This contributor contract from 1991 is for “one-time rights only”.

Entertainment for the Adventurous Lesbian

# ON OUR BACKS

526 Castro Street, San Francisco, CA 94114 415 861-4723

## CONTRIBUTOR CONTRACT

*Please review, sign and return one of the two enclosed agreements as soon as possible to the above address.*

Dear, [redacted]

We would like to publish your following contribution:

[redacted]

We shall pay you \$ 30 as compensation, within 30 days upon publication. We will not make plans for publication until we receive your signed agreement, so we ask for your speedy reply. We shall inform you within 30 days of when your contribution is scheduled to appear in a given issue.

1. You hereby grant Blush Entertainment Corporation (d.b.a. *On Our Backs*) all serial, reprint, and anthology rights in the contribution, as well as the right to use the contribution to promote, advertise, and exhibit *On Our Backs* / Blush Entertainment Corporation. one-time rights only

2. Your name will appear in the magazine.

MAILED APR 19 1991

“One-time rights only”

“

Reveal Digital has come to share the concerns expressed by a few contributors and others around the digitization of OOB and the potential impact it might have on contributor privacy.

—Reveal Digital. Statement about On Our Backs, 8/24/2016





Tara  
Robertson

## **Illegal aliens** (*May Subd Geog*)

UF Aliens—Legal status, laws, etc.

Aliens, Illegal [*Former heading*]

Illegal aliens—Legal status, laws, etc.

Illegal immigrants

Illegal immigration

Undocumented aliens

BT Aliens

RT Alien detention centers

Human smuggling

NT Children of illegal aliens

Women illegal aliens

—Legal status, laws, etc.

USE Illegal aliens

Illegal aliens' children

USE Children of illegal aliens

**Illegal aliens in literature** (*Not Subd Geog*)

“

the work accomplished by the  
Dartmouth students sets a  
powerful precedent for instituting  
**civic change at a grassroots level.**

—Lisa Peet. Library Journal, 6/13/2016

“

what it means for me to be  
seen as an equal and not  
be seen as an other, or as  
**less than.**

—Melissa Padilla, quoted in Library Journal by Lisa Peet, 6/13/2016

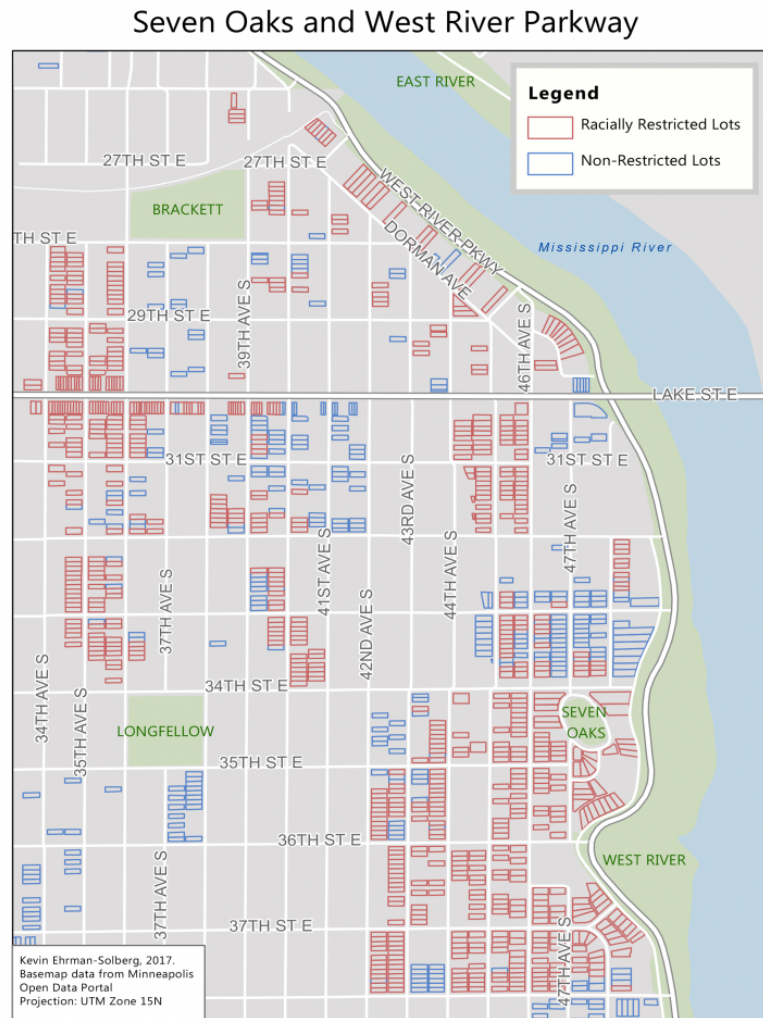


Melissa  
Padilla





# Mapping Prejudice





**John Mark Ockerbloom**

@JMarkOckerbloom

Following



Wow, there are a lot of Wikipedia articles on plantations with little or nothing about the people enslaved there:

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_p ...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_p...)

LIKE

1



10:04 PM - 26 May 2017



2



1



Tweet your reply



**John Mark Ockerbloom** @JMarkOckerbloom · 23h



Replying to @JMarkOckerbloom

Not all omit, but many largely erase. Former "Happy Antebellum Times" section in 1 article I just fixed didn't mention 20-50 unhappy slaves.



2



**John Mark Ockerbloom** @JMarkOckerbloom · 23h



I'm told there are a lot of people who say they're concerned with "erasure" of Southern history. Here's something you can help unerase.



1



3









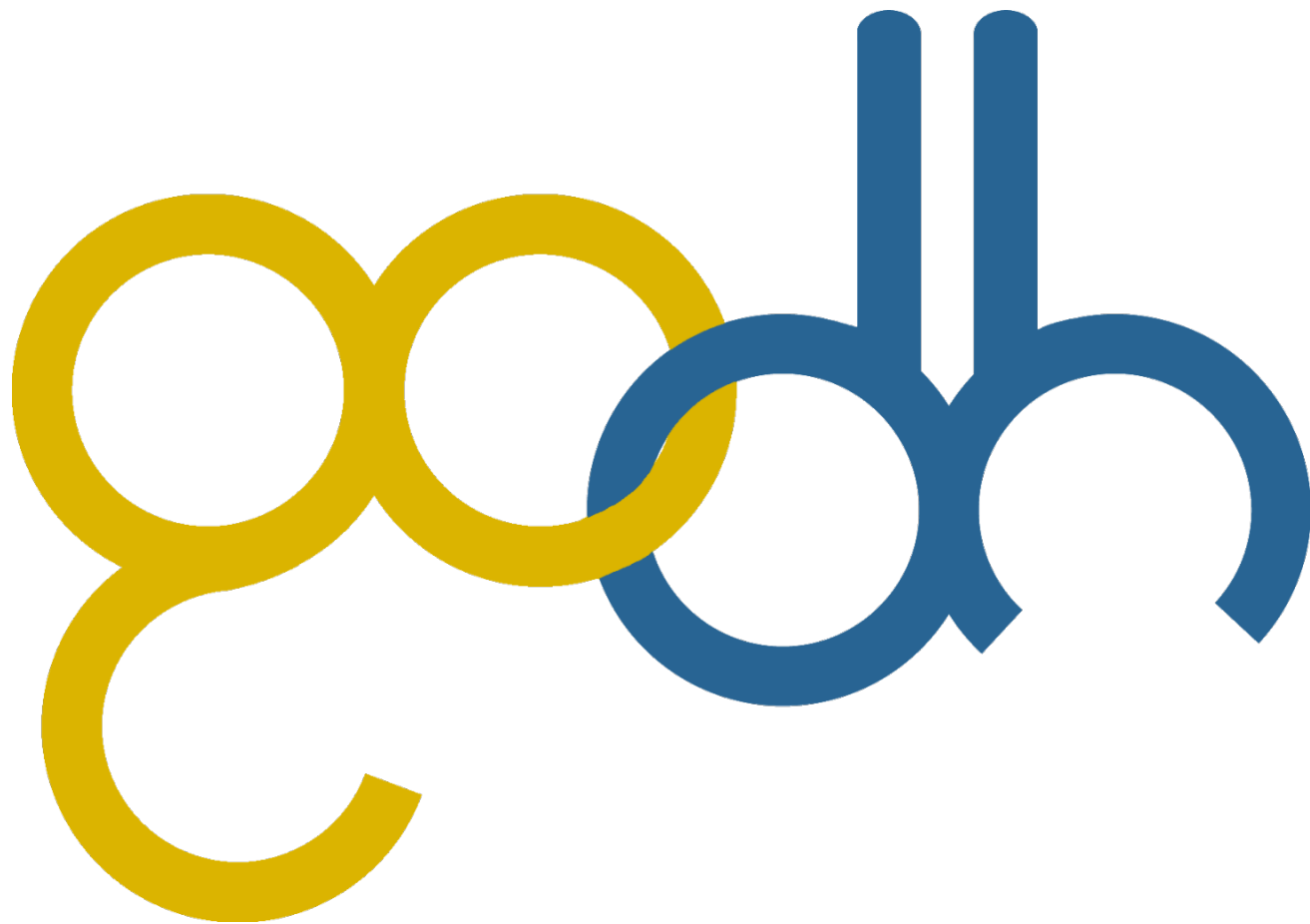
?

- What data do you collect, how, and why? Where does it come from?

What biases are embedded into your data collection and interpretation?

How will **you** disrupt harmful data collection & description practices?

Community



“break down barriers that hinder communication and collaboration among researchers and students of the Digital Arts, Humanities, and Cultural Heritage sectors in high, mid, and low income economies.

—Global Outlook::Digital Humanities website. Accessed 5/20/2017

## MICROAGGRESSIONS IN LIBRARIANSHIP

### Micro-insult: Second-class citizen

I am an elected university senator at my university and one of two senators elected from the library. I have been attending monthly senate meetings since the beginning

#### contact

@LIS microaggress

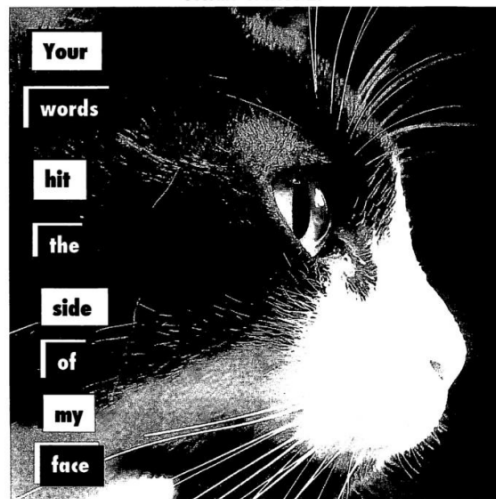
<http://lismicroaggressions.tumblr.com>

[lismicroaggressions@gmail.com](mailto:lismicroaggressions@gmail.com)

**LIS**

## Microaggressions

volume 1. issue 2.



cover art by Annie Pho

a space for those working in libraries, archives and  
information fields to share their experiences with  
microaggressions

APALA 35 • ALA Annual  
San Francisco • June 2015



## Our Mission

Mukurtu (MOOK-oo-too) is a grassroots project aiming to empower communities to manage, share, preserve, and exchange their digital heritage in culturally relevant and ethically-minded ways. We are committed to maintaining an open, community-driven approach to Mukurtu's continued development. Our first priority is to help build a platform that fosters relationships of respect and trust.

# Feminist Praxis in Library Leadership

“

[Avoiding leadership positions]  
might mean that you are leaving  
the leadership of our profession in  
the hands of those who aren't  
concerned about those things...

— Chris Bourg. “Mentors, Gender, Reluctance,” 2014



“

using **traditional  
organizational power** to  
push an agenda maybe  
isn't very feminist.

— Chris Bourg. “The radicalism is coming from inside the library,” 2015

**Feminist leadership is:**  
**politically engaged**

**Feminist leadership is:**  
**praxis**

**Feminist leadership is:**  
**shared**

“

Be absolutely committed to **transparency**. Do not assume that you know what others need/don't need to know.

— Baharak Yousefi. How to be a Good (Library) Boss, 2016



**M is for Rachel**

@RachelMFleming

 **Follow**

"Painfully Transparent" is the level of transparency that I'm going for.

"OMG Never Stops" is the level of communicating I'm going for.

RETWEETS

8

LIKES

13



12:36 PM - 25 May 2016



“

You can see the world  
as an **opportunist** or  
you can see the world  
as an **activist**.

— Tressie McMillan Cottom. Graduating Into A Terrible World. 5/13/2017

“

If you have some  
power, then your job is  
to empower somebody  
else.

— Toni Morrison. Interview in O Magazine. 11/2003





Whom does this work benefit,  
disadvantage, or exclude?

Whose values, perspective, or voice is  
represented, marginalized, or erased?

Whom do/can I influence and how?

Who are my allies?

Questions?

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